Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1754 - March 25 2011

(Please note that this is an extended Newsline report running 33 min, 11 seconds and containing 3 breaks.)

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1754 with a release date of Friday, March 25, 2011 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The FCC offers its support to Japan in its recovery from the March 11th earthquake and tsunami; the story of Hawaii's ham radio activation as the tsunami headed its way, ARISS celebrates its 600th school contact and more radar and G-P-S jamming exercised are announced in the U-K. Find out the details are on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1754 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESCUE RADIO: FCC OFFERS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO JAPAN

The FCC has offered its counterpart in Japan any assistance that it might be able to render. This, as recovery efforts continue in the wake of the March 11th earthquake and Tsunami. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in the newsroom with more:

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According to the trade publication Radio World, soon after the devastating events occurred, the FCC made contact with officials in Japan. This, to offer any help on the telecommunications front that it might be able to supply.

Tom Sullivan is the spokesperson for the FCC International Bureau. He is quoted as saying that his agency has reached out to its regulatory contacts in Japan and is also working with the State Department and the National Telecommunications & Information Administration to consider what assistance the FCC might be able to provide.

According to Sullivan, soon after the massive earthquake that hit Haiti, the FCC took a proactive role. This included providing technical assistance on emergency communications as well as passing along offers of help from private industry.

But Sullivan also notes that Japan is a different situation. It's a nation with its own very robust communications system. He says that on the telecommunications front Japan is very well prepared for a situations like this. Nevertheless, Sullivan says that the FCC will be able to offer its expertise should it be asked.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in the Newsroom in Los Angeles.

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In the article, Tom Sullivan noted that the FCC International Bureau could serve as a contact point for anyone in industry seeking information on whether and how they might be able to help but at this point in time no telecommunications assistance requests have been received. You can read more at tinyurl.com/fccjapan. (RW, B&C)

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RESCUE RADIO: HAWAII RACES WAS READY FOR THE MARCH 11th TSUNAMI

As Japan begins its slow journey back from the March 11th earthquake and tsunami that devastated a part of that Pacific Rim nation, and the continuing story of the reactor meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, lost in the news coverage has been the story of ham radio emergency preparedness across the Pacific. This as the tsunami hurled itself eastward.

One of the first major population centers to begin preparing for the unknown was the state of Hawaii where Ron Hashiro, AH6RH, is the State Civil Defense RACES Coordinator. He says that he learned about the approaching sea disturbance by e-mail and that triggered the alerting system that gets the trained emergency communicators ready for whatever they may soon face:

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AH6RH: "At that point we started the notification system of phone calls and other means of activating all of the other hams. In the meantime the radio started to get busy because other people had found out through TV, radio and other forums that there was a tsunami watch in effect and they were quite concerned."

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Hashiro tells Newsline that the system worked flawlessly and soon the needed emergency communications nets were in operation:

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AH6RH: "We placed phone calls to the different Amateur Radio Civil Defense coordinators on the various islands, they in turn placed phone calls and notified their people and got nets running on the different repeaters.

"On Oahu, W6BJF, Tom, ran the net, kept it active and passed messages between our Department of Emergency Management and our amateur radio community, keeping them both informed."

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By the time the tsunami approached Hawaiian shores all was in readiness, but thankfully Mother Nature spared Hawaii from the kind of devastation seen on the Japanese mainland:

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AH6RH: "We are fortunate that while we were waiting for the tsunami to come, it did not pose as great a (potential) for damage as it did in Japan. Some of the islands did pick up some damage on their west facing side but it was more localized as compared to what was on Japan."

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The bottom line is that while there was not the need for ham radio to any great extent as the tidal wave passed Hawaii, the hams of the Island state were ready if it had been a far more serious event.

Also, you can hear more with Ron Hashiro, AH6RH, about Hawaii's state wide ham radio ARES, RACES and CD preparedness system on this weeks Rain Report. Its on line right now at www.therainreport.com. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RESCUE RADIO: THE TSUNAMI HEADS TO THE AMERICAS

After passing Hawaii the giant wave front continued its trek eastward toward the Americas. Soon nations bordering on the Pacific began to issue warnings to their populations located near the coastline. Then reports started trickling in as we hear from Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennant, K6PZW:

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Marco Loarca, TG9ANM, is the Emergency Coordinator for Area D of the IARU's Region 2. He reports that the Club de Radio Aficionados de Guatemala was able to maintain communication via VHF and UHF with radio operators located near the nations coastline. Meantime, Jorge Sierra, LU1AS, his counterpart in Area G of reported that the Red Chilena Nor Austral monitored the frequency 7.070 MHz and beginning at 17:00 local time while the VHF and UHF emergency communications network was also activated.

In the United States, the Amateur Radio Emergency Services of California's Santa Cruz County was activated at approximately 08:00 a.m. local time. More than 30 local A.R.E.S. radio operators were made available to served agencies. These included the Santa Cruz County Emergency Operations Center, area evacuation centers, the Red Cross, a Salvation Army canteen truck, the Santa Cruz County Harbor Coast Guard Auxiliary and a number of local Fire Departments. Also on Friday morning the Santa Cruz County A.R.E.S. Team activated the Tsunami Resource Net in advance of the anticipated 5 to 7 foot wave that was expected to reach the coastline around 8:00 AM local time.

As expected, the tsunami did impact the Pacific coast. They caused an estimated 15 million dollars of damage to Santa Cruz Harbor. More that 100 boats were either damaged or sunk as a result of the waves.

Santa Cruz was not alone in receiving significant damage as a result of

the powerful tidal surge. Crescent City, located approximately 500 miles North of Santa Cruz, also received heavy damage. This lead to newly elected Governor Jerry Brown declaring these areas disaster zones. News reports say that one person died as a result of being swept out to sea with the high waves.

Lastly, on the other side of the United States northern border, Daniel Lamoureux VE2KA, reported that there was no damage from the tsunami on Canada's west coast.

That's whats known as we go to air.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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Our thanks to the International Amateur Radio Union for much of the information in Bruce's report. (IARU - R2 Report)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: ARISS CELEBRATES 600th SCHOOL CONTACT

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station, better known by the acronym ARISS, reached a milestone on Thursday, March 17th. This, when it held its 600th space to ground contact between astronaut Cady Coleman, KC5ZTH on board the International Space Station and students from several schools in Plock and Liszyno, Poland.

The contact supported lessons about space and space exploration, communication and technology. Scout Amateur Radio Club S-P-5-Zed-B-A handled the radio connection during which the astronaut Coleman fielded 19 space related questions from the students at the two schools.

Nearly 120 people were in the audience and there was also extensive media coverage. This included newspapers, four scientific magazines, one radio magazine, a television station, national radio and two internet portals.

And less we forget, we will have more ham radio space related news later on in this weeks Amateur Radio Newsline report. (Southgate)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the JR6YQF Amateur Radio Society on Okinawa in the Pacific.

(5 sec pause here)

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RESCUE RADIO: HAM RADIO REPLACES PHONES DURING HOSPITAL OUTAGE

When nurses and other caregivers picked up their phones at Childrens Hospital of Orange County at 5:30 AM on March 21, there was no dial tone. A power surge, probably from lightning, had caused failure of the central processor in the hospital's phone switch. How would they make contact with physicians and patient transport companies?

Fortunately, the lead operator at the switchboard knew just what to do. She opened her disaster book to the Amateur Radio support page and followed the established procedure for activating the Hospital Disaster Support Communications System, or HDSCS. She had several options, but this time she used an emergency tie-line to reach April Moell WA6OPS, who is head of this ARES group that specializes in helping hospitals when communications fail.

April established an on-air network and initiated a callout of HDSCS communicators by telephone and pager. Ken Simpson W6KOS and Clay Stearns KE6TZR arrived at the hospital shortly to establish a link with the outside world. More operators followed to communicate between the most important units within the hospital including the Emergency Department, Neonatal Intensive Care, Pediatric Intensive Care, and Pharmacy.

April had given her home telephone number to the Supervisor

at Orange County Communications for incoming call relay.

This resulted in several urgent messages for the hospital,

including one regarding transport of a young patient coming

in for an appendectomy.

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(Audio from HDSCS net)

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By 10:45 AM, some phones were working but additional repair components were being awaited from a supplier. HDSCS continued to provide unit-to-unit and hospital-to-community messaging as needed, including coordination of patient treatments and a request for blood. At 1:02 PM, the repair crew announced that the phone system was back to normal except for some voicemail functions. HDSCS members remained on station for 30 more minutes as they always do to insure that phone systems are stable.

There's lightning here in southern California only a few days a year, but it's a definite danger to our hospital phone systems. During an intense thunderstorm last October, HDSCS members responded to St. Jude Hospital in Fullerton when a power outage caused overloading of the telephone system there.

A total of eleven HDSCS members participated in this [latest] communications emergency. They were familiar with this hospital because HDSCS has helped in communications emergencies there before, including a 22-hour external phone outage when a construction accident severed fiber optic cables in August 2006.

This is the 31st year of HDSCS service to medical facilities in Orange County and this was the 114th activation to provide support when telephones have failed or overloaded. The reasons have ranged from equipment failure, to cut cables, to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and wildfires. Each member has his or her own Go-Kit, ready to take to any of the 36 supported hospitals to establish communications.

For more information on HDSCS -- and how hams in your community can organize to provide rapid response like this to hospitals -- point your Web browser to www.hdscs.org. Those are the initials for Hospital Disaster Support Communications System, followed by dot-org.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Joe Moell. K0OV. (K0OV)

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RESCUE RADIO: VK RADIO OPERATOR HONORED FOR HELPING SAVE SIX LIVES

The Australian MySailing dot com website reports that Marine Rescue Terrey Hills radio operator Ian Murdoch has been awarded the Region Commander's Certificate of Appreciation from New South Wales Police Assistant Commissioner Ken McKay. According to the report, Murdoch along with four members of Broken Bay Water Police, received awards for their part in the rescue of six people on board the stricken yacht Encore which foundered in gale force conditions off Broken Bay on the afternoon of October 23rd, 2008.

On that day Murdoch was sole radio operator at the Marine Rescue Sydney radio base and although alone, he managed 75 minutes of non-stop intense pressures in response to a Mayday call for help. He relayed the distressed vessel's position to other vessels in the area, informed Water Police, and coordinated a veritable fleet of responding vessels. These included a police launch, a passenger ferry, a bulk carrier and a training yacht. At the same time he maintained contact with the sinking vessel until Water Police were able to take rescue the six passengers on-board and thereby saving their lives.

The account did not say whether or not Murdoch was an Australian ham radio operator. You can read the full story in mysailing.com.au. (WIA News)

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RADIO STANDARDS: NIST CONDUCTING TIME AND FREQUENCY USER SURVEY

The National Institute of Standards and Technology's Time and Frequency Division is conducting a survey to learn more about its users, and to find out how the can make its services more useful in the future.

NIST services include stations WWV, WWVH, and WWVB, which provide reference time and frequency signals by radio. NIST also operates its Internet Time Service, which provides accurate time synchronization to computer systems, and several other services that provide time information via telephone or web pages.

John Lowe, the manager of National Institute of Standards and Technology radio stations WWV, WWVH and WWVB in Ft. Collins, Colorado. He says that the survey should take just a few minutes to complete, and your input will be greatly appreciated.

If you use any of these services -- and what radio amateur doesn't --please complete the survey which is on-line at www.tf.nist.gov/survey. (NIST)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: SOUTHWEST 75 METER VHF/UHF NET TIME CHANGE

The Sunday evening Southwest 75 Meter VHF/UHF and Above Weak Signal Net on 3 point 920 MHz has changed its operating schedule. According to a note from K6STK and WI6M, the net now begins at 5:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Savings Time and ends one hour later at 6:30 p.m.. If you live in the region covered by this net and are into VHF/UHF weak signal work, give this group a try. (K6TSK and WI6M via the VHF Reflector)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: AES SUPERFEST APRIL 1 - 2 IN MILWAUKEE

The annual Amateur Electronics Supply Superfest will take place on Friday, April 1st from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday, April 2nd from 8:30 a.m to 3:00 p.m. at the AES Milwaukee Warehouse. This venue is located at 5710 West Good Hope Road in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Admission is free with many manufacturers' representatives present to answer your questions about their latest gear. This year's special guest is ARRL President Kay Craigie, N3KN. And late word that ham radio's Mr. Audio, Bob Heil, K9EID, and Radio School's Gordon West, WB6NOA will team up to conduct a ham radio oriented Audio Workshop.

More about this and the entire 2011 AES Superfest is on line at www.aesham.com/superfest. (Press Release)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: NASA ASTRONAUT DOUG WHEELOCK, KB5BOC, TO HOST HAMVENTION FORUM

Some names in the news. First up is NASA Astronaut Doug Wheelock, KF5BOC , will be holding forth at his own forum at the 2011 Dayton Hamvention. Wheelock returned to Earth in November of 2010 after serving as Commander of the International Space Station will speak from 1:15 to 2:15 P.M. on Saturday, May 21st in Hara Arena Meeting Room 3.

During his stay on-orbit, KF5BOC along with fellow Astronaut Shannon Walker, KD5DXB, regularly participated in the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station program or ARISS program during which he made some two dozen general contacts each day he was on the air. Colonel Wheelock is expected to share his experiences about space flight and using amateur radio in space. (Dayton Hamventionr)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: KI6ZMV ELECTED NEWS TREASURER OF ARNEWSLINE

Leslie Monzon, KI6ZMV, of Valencia, California, has been elected as the new treasurer if the Amateur Radio Newsline. She replaces the late Andy Jarema, N6TCQ, who passed way in November of 2009.

Re-elected to the Newsline Board of Directors were incumbents Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, as president; Davis Black, KB4KCH, as Vice President, Joe Schrader, W9JUV, as Secretary, Mark Abramowicz, NT3V as Chief Executive Officer and Don Wilkbnks, AE5DW, as Member-at Large. Abramowicz will also continue as Chairman of the Young Ham of the Year Judging Committee.

Elections were a part of the annual Amateur Radio Newsline Board of Directors Meeting held by teleconference on Sunday, March 20th. (ARNewsline(tm))

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: G4FSU APPOINTED AS RSGB HF MANAGER

The Radio Society of Great Britain Board of Directors has approved the appointment of Ian Greenshields, G4FSU. This, following the decision by John Gould, G3WKL to step down from this honorary position.

Apart from a having a very successful career as an RF and microwave communications engineer, Greenshields is well versed in radio spectrum matters. This based on his role of Secretary to the International Amateur Radio Union Region One High Frequency Committee since 2005. Recently, the IARU also appointed G4FSU as a Technical Consultant that requires regular involvement in ITU and CEPT matters. (RSGB)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: NEW IARU REGION 3 SECRETARY

The Board of Directors of IARU Region 3 have announced the appointment of Ken Yamamoto, JA1CJP, as the organizations new Secretary. Yamamoto holds a Bachelor of Science degree in electronic engineering and has worked in the satellite communications field for many years. He replaces Jay Oka, JA1TRC, who has reportedly stepped down for personal reasons on March 9th.   WIA News

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BREAK 3

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the

United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline

with links to the world from our only official website at

www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer

services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO HISTORY: BBC TO CLOSE ORDFORDNESS TRANSMITTER SITE Another famed radio transmitting site is being decommissioned. This one is owned by the British Broadcasting Company and is not one very many on this side of the Atlantic know about. Amateur Radio Newsline's Norm Seeley, has the rest of the story:

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Unless you live in Europe or are a truly devoted low frequency DX'er here in the United States, you likely have never heard of the British Broadcasting Company's transmitter site at Ordfordness. It's an operation that sits on 648 KHz and has a five tower array beamed to Europe with very little signal off the back toward the United States. And that's what makes the signal from Ordfordness such a great catch for medium wave D-X listeners on this side of the Atlantic pond.

But all that will end on March 27th. That's when the BBC switches off this transmitter site for good.

But its demise will not go undocumented. As a historical note, Jonathan Marks, G-8-W-G-N, has released a short documentary that traces the history of the Ordfordness transmitter site from its inception through 2003 when the video was made. Marks, who was the former producer and host of the famed Radio Netherlands Media Network program is joined by Ordfordness radio engineer Andy Matherson who explains the way in which the site operates.

It's a great tour of a historic moment in European medium wave broadcast radio. You can experience it for yourself on line at vimeo.com/20996209

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Norm Seeley, KI7UP, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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Another sad moment in broadcast history, but one that Jonathan Marks, G8WGN, has taken the time to preserve. (Via e-mail)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: TWO NEW ASTRO-HAMS

And a follow-up to last weeks story about a pair of Astronauts who had been tested and had passed the Amateur Service exams. Since then, Luca Parmitano has been issued the call sign KF5KDP and Chris Cassidy received KF5KDR. Both passed their tests on March 8th are slated to fly on future International Space Station expeditions. (ARISS)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: AO-51 ENTERS AN ECLIPSE PERIOD

Eclipses are back for AO-51, and the length is increasing every day. According to AO-51 Command Station, Mark Hammond, N8MH, eclipses are now lasting about 1 to 2 minutes per pass. They are expected to increase in length pretty fast, gaining a minute every day or two over the coming weeks and month.

AO-51 is still running under power management in single transmitter mode on the 435.300 MHz downlink running approximately 1 point 3 watts. The satellite will be off during eclipses and probably right before and after. You'll probably still hear the transmitter cycling off and on around eclipse times, but most voice users will appreciate the stronger signals. AO-51 be in this mode until further notice. (ANS)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: BJ8TA AN EME AND SATELLITE DXPEDITION

AMSAT-China Chief Executive Officer Alan Kung, BA1DU reports that his group is organizing an expedition to southwest China. This, for EME experiments and amateur satellite communications. The expedition team will use the special technology experiments amateur radio call sign BJ8TA. The group will also be active on the available satellites during the expedition period. The BJ8TA Amateur Radio EME and Satellites Expedition is supported by the Bureau of Radio Regulation of China and Yunnan Astronomical Observatory of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. (DX News)

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WORLDBEAT - UK: MORE RADAR AND GPS JAMMING EXERCISES PLANNED

The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense has informed U-K telecommunications regulator Ofcom that further Global Positioning System jamming exercises will be. The dates announced are May 19th to the 26th starting at 07:00 U-T-C each day.

Also, ground based radar jamming tests will take place in the South West approaches against the remote radar head at Portreath on May 21st and 22nd using F-18 Growler aircraft. There will also be radar jamming against deployed targets in South West Wales thru from May 19th to the 26th.

Communications and airborne radar jamming will take place throughout the same period on the East Coast with aircraft operating within the North Sea Military Danger Areas. The Ministry of Defense adds that safety of life operations will take precedence over these defense test exercise activities at all times.

The purpose of these tests is to likely to determine the vulnerability of U-K defenses to jamming of vital radio based defenses. (Southgate)

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WORLDBEAT - NEW ZEALAND: HAM RADIO TO CELEBRATE THE 2011 RUGBY WORLD CUP GAMES

The New Zealand Amateur Radio Transmitters or NZART Council has declared the Rugby World Cup to be a Special Event and encourages you to use the ZM prefix. According to the NZART, declaring this a special event it allows New Zealand radio amateurs the use of this special prefix during September and October. A Map of New Zealand has been placed on the NZART website with game locations linked to contact details of local branches, any planned special events, on air events, and local repeater frequencies. NZART Branches are to be encouraged to invite visiting hams to attend meetings and any special events. The New Zealand Amateur Radio Transmitters is that nation's national amateur radio society. (NZART)

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ON THE AIR: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

On the air, keep an ear open for members of the Republic of China Centenary Foundation who will be activating special event station BV100 during the CQ WW WPX SSB Contest on March 26th and 27th. The operators from Taiwan will then be on the air from Shaio-Liu-Chiu Island until the end of the year as a special event is to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their homeland. Operations will be on all bands and modes. Complete details along with an operating schedule and information as to how to earn a BV100 award is available at www.bv100.tw/en. QSL's go via BV2KI. (OPDX)

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ON THE AIR: NEPAL COMING TO EME

The 9N7WL 2 meter EME operation will take place as part of the 9N7AN DXpedition from Nepal's High View Resort which is located about 25 kilometers from the capital city of Kathmandu. This will be the first time that the DXCC entity Nepal and the Maidenhead main locator NL is activated on the 2 meter band via the moon.

E-M-E operation is scheduled to start on March 30th. Moonrise at 9N7WL will be at 3.30 UTC. The most difficult part of the world to reach by E-M-E will be to the southern part of the USA but there is no common moon with the state of Texas until Sunday April 3rd. This expedition is slated to end on April 7th. (K5WL, DL9GFB via MMMonVHF)

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DX

In DX, ON4AEO will be active from Botswana as A25FC between April 14th and the 18th. Operation will be on 160-10 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK. QSL via ON4CJK.

LA8HGA will be operational as JW9HGA from the Longyearbyen Amateur Radio Club station located on Spitsbergen Island, Svalbard between May 19th and the 23rd. Activity will be on the HF bands and CW only. QSL is via LA8HGA via the bureau or direct.

VE3ZIK is active portable 9A from Croatia until March 30th. He also plans to be active in the Russian DX Contest, the CQ WPX SSB Contest and mentions that there is a good chance he will be on from Vrana Lake as well. QSL via DK8ZZ, via the bureau, Logbook of the World, eQSL or direct. E-mail Bureau requests for QSLs can go to ve3zik (at) gmail (dot) com

The Hellenic Amateur Radio Association of Australia are organizing a DXpeditiion to Lord Howe Island for July. They will be using the club call sign VK9HR and the organizers are looking for CW operators and experienced SSB and digital modes operators who would be interested in attending this operation. Any interested operators please contact Tommy Horozakis, VK2IR, via e-mail to president (at) haraoa (dot) com.

Lastly, A group of Mexican operators will be on

the air from the Isla de Lobos in Veracruz State

between April 29th and May 1st. They will also

activate the Lobos Island lighthouse on all HF

bands, plus 6 meters and AO 27, AO 51 and SO 50

ham satellites. Modes used will include CW, SSB

and RTTY. QSL via XE1AY.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: EMCOMM - THE PARADIGM IS

CHANGING

And finally this week, a bit of an editorial comment. While ham radio within Japan is playing a role in post quake and post tsunami recovery efforts, there appears to be little if any international long haul emergency communication on the High Frequency bands. Instead, it seems that ham radio's traditional role in this area has largely been replaced by the popular social networks. Amateur Radio Newsline's Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, takes a look at the way these Twitter and Facebook are changing the paradigm and starting to displace ham radios place in the health and welfare information flow:

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RESCUE RADIO: THE PARADIGM SHIFTS - NO NEED FOR LONG HAUL H&W TRAFFIC

So what about ham radios traditional role in post disaster relief as a carrier of long distance health and welfare traffic in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami? So far, there has not been very much of that and here is likely the reason why.

While the earthquake did knock out a lot of local telephone service across Japan, unaffected was the island nation's multi-redundant broadband system. Indeed, within minutes of the quake hitting, residents in Japan were texting and tweeting messages to their loved ones as to what had transpired. News services were looking at these tweets on Twitter and using them as a source of information for their initial reports on the disaster. So for those living in or near any of Japan's major population centers like Tokyo, there was little impact on their personal communications with the outside world

Also unaffected was the redundant communications networks used by the worlds various broadcast entities with news bureaus in Tokyo. And when the first wave of the Tsunami came ashore the world watched it happen live from an NHK news helicopter's camera whose signal was microwaved back to Tokyo and then out around the globe.

The rural areas of Japan are a totally different matter. Some towns are still without any form of utilities including water, gas, electrical power, telephone or broadband service. And its likely to be that way for some time. And sadly, there are those coastal towns in Northern Japan that took the full brunt of the tidal waves. Most of these were destroyed with little or nothing left to even say that only recently they had existed. So, right now, trying to get health and welfare messages into those towns still isolated is a difficult if not impossible task. Messages addressed to residents of those towns wiped

away by the tsunami will likely never be delivered.

When one takes a step back and takes a look at the whole picture it's easy to see and to hear why there are so few health and welfare messages being handled on the long haul ham radio bands. In the more populated areas, ham radio was replaced by Twitter and Facebook. In rural Japan there's simply no way to get a message through.

Or to put it another way, as massive and devastating as this earthquake was, its communications needs outside Japan do not fit any of the traditional models that hams world wide are accustomed to dealing with. It also says that as long as a nation's broadband infrastructure is not severely damaged, ham radios role as the long haul carrier of health and welfare traffic is being replace by a smart phone and an account on Facebook or Twitter.

I'm Don Wilbanks, AE5DW.

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The bottom line appears to be this. As long as a nation's broadband infrastructure and its connections to the outside world are not severely damaged, and its population is communications savvy, the various social networks now provide a far faster way to pass health and welfare messaging than ham radio can ever hope to supply. But in those circumstances where there is no other means of long haul communications, ham radio will always have a significant role to play. (ARNewsline(tm))

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's WIA News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), 28197 Robin Avenue, Santa Clarita California, 91350

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Damron, N8TMW, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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